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**Niagara County**

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# Niagriculture

January 2007 Issue

## 2007 Calendar Events

<b>January 24</b>	<b>Winter Fruit School at CCE</b> , Orleans County 8- 3:30 preregister by January 19, 585-798- 4265
<b>January 30</b>	<b>Winter Dairy Management</b> at Jordon Hall, Geneva \$30, 585-343-3040 x 138 for information. Also held January 31 at Batavia Part House
<b>February 3 –April 21</b>	<b>Youth Tractor Safety Course</b> , Bentley Brothers, Albion Saturdays from 1-3 (see article)
<b>February 7</b>	<b>Pesticide Certification Test</b> at 1 pm CCE, Niagara County, 4487 Lake Avenue; Pre-register at 716-851-7200 at least 3 days before. Study materials available at Extension
<b>February 7</b>	<b>WNY Soybean/Small Grain Conference</b> , Batavia Party House (Feb 8 Holiday Inn Waterloo)
<b>February 7-9</b>	<b>Viticulture 2007 and Annual NY Wine Industry</b> , Rochester Riverside Convention Center
<b>February 14</b>	<b>CAFO Road Show</b> , Genesee River Hotel, Mt. Morris – information at 585-343-3040
<b>February 14 &amp;15</b>	<b>NY Vegetable Conference</b> , Syracuse
<b>February 22 &amp; 23</b>	<b>Hoof Care Workshops</b> (to be announced)
<b>March 10</b>	<b>2nd Annual Dry Hay Conference</b> , DiPacific’s Restaurant, Farmington
	March 21 National Ag Day
<b>March 23 &amp; 24</b>	<b>Swine Production School</b> , Cornell

### **Building Inspections by Towns Started January 1, 2007**

The New York Department of State recently issued new regulations governing the inspection of all non-residential buildings by town officials. Under these new regulations, which go in to effect on January 1, 2007, all non-residential buildings, including farm buildings, will need to be inspected every three years for compliance with the property maintenance code and certain aspects of the fire safety code.

While historically farm buildings have been exempt from the building code, they have had to adhere to the property maintenance code and fire safety code provisions dealing with general safety methodologies and practices. Unfortunately, the recently revised versions of these codes were intended for non-residential buildings such as office buildings and do not recognize the unique nature of farm buildings. They therefore have a series of requirements that could prove to be quite costly to farmers. Beyond that there has been no clear guidance given to farmers about which aspects of the fire code they need to follow.

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New York Farm Bureau has been actively engaged with the Department of State over the past few months to address this situation. While the Department has committed to addressing this issue, a formal solution will not be possible until after the regulations are in place. With that in mind, the Department is advising towns to NOT inspect farm buildings until after a formal solution has been reached.

**TAKE ACTION: if you are visited by a building inspector:**

Recognizing that not all towns may receive this position from the Department, we are advising farms to politely request that any building inspector intent on inspecting the farm first contact:

Cheryl Fischer, P.E. Assistant Director of Code Interpretations  
New York State Department of State Code Enforcement and Administration  
41 State Street, Suite 1130, Albany, NY 12231  
Tel: 518-474-4073  
FAX: 518-486-4487

(e-mail from Dr. Mike Baker)

**New York Agriculture Documentary to be Aired on Public Television**

On January 11th, the 56-minute documentary "The Producers: Taking Center Stage on New York Agriculture" was premiered at the 175th Anniversary Celebration and Annual Forum in Liverpool. Using the theme of New York City theater but applying it to the theater of agricultural producers across New York State, the program gives an upbeat and optimistic look at some of the best marketing and technology of 8 or so farm businesses from Albion to Long Island.

9 PBS affiliates are expected to air this WCNY – PBS (Syracuse)-produced program in early February. A check with WNED-TV (Channel 17) in Buffalo does not find it in their schedule. Feel free to call 716-845-7000 and encourage the program manager to air this program.

**Do We Have Any Farms in the Same Family That Have Been in Niagara County for 200 Years?**

It was a bit of a surprise to find 11 farms as far west as Ripley in Chautauqua County (Cochrane) and Waterport in Orleans (Browns Berry Patch) awarded the Bicentennial Farm Award at the New York State Agricultural Society meeting this year. As far as we know, Porter Farm (still in the hands of Mrs. Burton Porter in Somerset) is the oldest farm still technically in the same family and this one dates to 1824. In any event, next years honorees will be any century farm east of Syracuse and in 2008, century farms west of Syracuse.

**Know the Sulfur Content of Your Diesel Fuel  
Dennis Buffington, Dept. of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Penn State University**

The sulfur content in "on-road" transportation diesel fuel is regulated by the federal government. The sulfur content has been greatly reduced in recent months and it is critical that you know the sulfur content of the fuel that you are using in your diesel engines on the farm.

Before 1993, the allowable sulfur level in diesel fuel was 5,000 parts per million (ppm). From 1993 until earlier this year, allowable sulfur was 500 ppm. However, starting June 2006, the ultra-low sulfur requirement was implemented which means that the sulfur content must be no higher than 15 ppm for "on-road" transportation fuel. The government is requiring the use of the ultra-low sulfur fuels to reduce the concentrations of sulfur compounds in the environment. However, when sulfur content is reduced in diesel fuel, one consequence is that lubricity of the fuel is greatly reduced. Lubricity of a fuel is the ability of the fuel to provide lubrication to reduce wear between moving parts of the diesel injector pump and the fuel injectors.

Fuel used for "off-road" functions (such as farm, construction, and forestry operations) is

exempted from the ultra-low sulfur requirements, at least for the present time. You can still legally use the low sulfur fuel (fuel with 500 ppm sulfur), but the problem is that not all fuel suppliers are carrying both the "on-road" (15 ppm) and the "off-road" (500 ppm) diesel fuel.

How do you know the sulfur content of the fuel being delivered to you? The only way is to ask your fuel supplier for the sulfur content. If he says he doesn't know, insist that he find out and inform you. If your current fuel supplier can only deliver "on-road" diesel fuel to your farm tank, then you have three alternatives: 1) ask your supplier to verify that a lubricity agent has been added to your fuel, 2) add a lubricity agent yourself to the ultra-low sulfur fuel to provide the protection needed in your diesel engines or 3) find a supplier who will deliver "off-road" diesel fuel. Many different lubricity agents are available at the big-box stores as well as auto supply shops, but these can be quite expensive. A more cost-effective approach is to use biodiesel. Biodiesel has virtually no sulfur content but has excellent lubricity properties. Using just a B1 blend (1% biodiesel with 99% regular diesel fuel) improves lubricity of ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel by as much as 65%.

Biodiesel is becoming more widely available in many states. To get up-to-date information on where it is available in Pennsylvania, check the web site for the National Biodiesel Board at <http://www.biodiesel.org/>. Click on "Guide to Buying Biodiesel." Then under the heading of DISTRIBUTORS, click on "Click here for a national map of biodiesel distributors." Then click on "Pennsylvania" on the map. Make sure that you are buying biodiesel and not just crude, unprocessed vegetable oil. Ask the distributor to provide certification that the biodiesel meets ASTM D6751 standards.

### **Left Behind in the Computer World?**

It's never too late to break in. Niagara County Community College is offering short sessions on a variety of computer topics and the charge is only \$5 per course! For example, introduction to computers will have 2 sessions on Introduction to Computers at the Summit

Mall site Feb 3 from 10-4 and February 10th from 10-1. There are 15 other courses of varying complexity scheduled as well. Call 614-6470 Or look at [www.niagaracc.suny.edu](http://www.niagaracc.suny.edu) for more information.

### **Tractor and Farm Machinery Certification**

Even though some of you say that with the minimum wage at \$7.15 per hour, you would never hire a kid to operate a tractor, we often get calls from grandparents and parents about grand children and children who they think would benefit from a tractor safety course. Non-farm relatives and others who hang around the farm and sometimes do learn to start and operate a tractor may not legally need the certification but would still benefit from a course. We've had no interest in a course here in Niagara County but will be assisting in the teaching of a course in Orleans County. See the insert. By the way, although the minimum wage is \$7.15, there are still provisions for a much lower wage for youth under 18 doing farm work – if you can get them to work for less.

### **Niagara County Community College Considering an Agricultural Business A.A.S. Degree**

Cornell Cooperative Extension has cooperated with NCCC in reviewing a proposal for a 2-year associates degree in agricultural business. The difficulty is that to actually offer this, the NYS Education Department needs to see support from potential employers stating that this is needed. We have selected some of the more likely farmer and ag business employers and mailed the one-page survey without giving out our mailing list. If you have received this survey or would like to give your opinion on the need for a business degree program with an agricultural emphasis. Please complete it and send it or ask for more information from Rose Ann Roberts, Associate Dean at the College (716-614-6450).

Articles submitted by Paul E. Lehman, Extension Educator